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## *Alice in den Städten* (Part II)

Kenneth O. ANDERSON

### Abstract

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This paper continues the study of Wim Wenders' film *Alice in den Städten*/*Alice in the Cities* (1974) which was undertaken in *Alice in den Städten* Part I (聖学院大学論叢, 第26巻第2号, 2014), from the scene of Lisa, Alice and Philip in the hotel room in New York City. It follows the path Philip and Alice take to Germany after they have been separated from Lisa and explores how the relationship of Philip and Alice changes and deepens. It also explores how Philip becomes more self-aware and more conscious of others besides himself, and thus finds a way to keep writing. This paper also examines how the story of Philip and Alice is also the story of the film itself: how film and cinematography work to lead us to self-reflection and reflection on the world around us. In addition, popular songs used to underpin the story of the film are examined to see how they relate to the themes of the film and how the film reflects trends in U.S. and European films and culture.

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**Key words:** television, flight, escape, self-reflection, photography, fear, images, pop culture, John Ford, *Les Quatres Cents Coups*

Note: This article is Part II of a paper on the film *Alice in den Städten* (1974). It continues an explication of the film from the scene in which Philip Winter, the main character, is staying at night in the hotel room of Lisa and Alice Van Damm in New York City.

After Alice has fallen asleep, Lisa tells Philip, "In the past two years we lived in four different cities." Philip, reading a German newspaper, looks up distractedly and asks, "Where?" Lisa doesn't answer that question, but continues to talk about her troubles with the man she lives with, and one sees that Philip and Lisa, as with Philip and his girlfriend previously, find it hard to leave their own thoughts to sympathize with another. Philip asks, "Isn't he [the man Lisa is leaving] Alice's father?" Lisa shakes her head, indicating no. Embarrassed, Philip laughs and changes the conversation: "Alice told me a joke at lunch. Heard this one? Do you know how to fit four elephants into a

red VW?” Lisa smiles and shakes her head “No” again, then turns serious and tells Philip, eyes cast down, “I can’t sleep with you, but I’d like to share the bed with you.” She looks up at him to see how he’ll take this offer. A bit taken aback, Philip looks down, leaning his head on his right hand, a clear look of disappointment on his face. Lisa gets up to throw her cigarette out of the open window, from where we can hear either a police or fire siren. She pulls down the bed covers, turns her back to Philip and removes her blouse, Philip watching her furtively as she does ; he takes off his shirt and turns off the light.

Wenders makes yet another comment on television, through Philip, in the next scene. It is still night ; Philip is watching the television with the sound turned down ; on the television a montage is shown of various actors : David Janssen of *The Fugitive* television series (another reference to flight), Ali McGraw (whom we remember appeared in the 1972 film *The Getaway* with Steve McQueen), etc. Lisa, watching him, asks, “What are you writing?” Phil reads to her what he has written :

The inhuman thing about America is not so much that they hack up everything into commercials, though that’s bad enough, but in the end all programs become commercials. Commercials for the status quo. Every image radiates the same disgusting and nauseating message. A kind of boastful contempt. Not one image leaves you in peace, they all want something from you.

Television, then, is opium for the masses, something that drugs you and makes you unable to think clearly or to function. Again, Lisa responds with a reflection on her own life and the husband she has left : “When I told Hans I wanted to leave him, he said everything will be fine once we get an apartment in New York.” Philip answers, “If he wants you, he should go with you.” Just as Philip says this, the words “Come on Over to Our House” appear on the television screen, followed by a scene of a plane crashing into the sea, as if to symbolize the domestic turbulence that Lisa is experiencing. She continues, “He said he’d rather kill himself”, while, in the TV film, a pilot in another plane looks on in horror at the plane that is burning in the waves below. Philip makes a sympathetic sound ; it is another “What can you do?” moment. Lisa leans back, lost in thought, while Philip watches an animated sequence on television for the beginning of *The Late Late Show*.

The next morning Lisa is shown trying to leave the hotel surreptitiously. She looks back at Philip to see whether he has noticed ; he has, but he pretends to be asleep. Lisa writes a note for Philip and leaves. After she does, Philip gets up to read the note, which says, “I’ll be on top of the Empire State Building at 1 p. m. Lisa.” (Behind Philip as he reads this note, on the wall, is a print of a painting of a boy and girl in a rustic scene near an old mill which seems itself to be a scene of

leavetaking.) Having read the note, Philip goes to the adjacent room to see that Alice is still asleep ; then he goes to the window, opens the blinds, and sees Lisa getting into a taxi in the street below. He draws the blinds shut again, gets back into bed, and reaches for Lisa's pillow to tuck under his head. As he does, he smells Lisa's scent on it, breathes the scent in, and buries his face in the pillow in a moment of longing.

The next scene is of Philip and Alice going to the Empire State Building. Philip, irritated by having the responsibility for taking care of Alice thrust upon him, insults Alice : "Your jacket is way too big." Alice ignores him, so he says, "What have you got in there? Hot dogs?" Alice reaches inside her jacket, pulls out her wallet, and shows it to him. Philip turns away, out of sorts. Alice doesn't pull out this wallet again until near the end of the film, when she suddenly remembers that she has had a \$100 dollar bill in this wallet all along ; she offers it to Philip with a flourish. In the second half of the film, Philip has often been shown to be upset with Alice and exasperated that he has to spend his dwindling supply of money on helping her to try to find her grandmother, but by the time Alice offers him the hundred dollars, their relationship has changed, so that Philip's seeming irritation with Alice in this later scene is pretended and playful.

At the top of the Empire State Building, Philip sees below, through a telescope, Lisa leaving the hotel room where they had stayed and getting into a taxi. He says to himself, "Now I get it. No flight to Germany. I guess we don't have to wait any longer," thinking of course that Lisa has abandoned them and left the responsibility of taking care of Alice up to him. He walks over to where Alice is looking in another direction through another telescope. We see what she is looking at through the telescope : she goes from the top of the Flatiron Building to the street below, then back again, and a seagull flies into her view. She follows it with her telescope as it flies, right to left. Here is yet another symbol of flight, reminding one of Delmore Schwartz's poem about watching sea gulls fly when he was five years old, "The Ballad of the Fifth Year" :

Where the sea gulls sleep or indeed where they fly  
Is a place of different traffic. Although I  
Consider the fishing bay (where I see them dip and curve  
And purely glide) a place that weakens the nerve  
Of will, and closes my eyes, as they should not be  
(They should burn like the street-light all night quietly,  
So that whatever is present will be known to me),  
Nevertheless the gulls and the imagination  
Of where they sleep, which comes to creation

In strict shape and color, from their dallying  
Their wings slowly, and suddenly rallying  
Over, up, down the arabesque of descent,  
Is an old act enacted, my fabulous intent  
When I skated, afraid of policemen, five years old,  
In the winter sunset, sorrowful and cold,  
Hardly attained to thought, but old enough to know  
Such grace, so self-contained, was the best escape to know.

Alice, like the five-year-old boy in this poem, has, perhaps, “hardly attained to thought” yet : she is able to be in the moment, buoyant, not concerned too much yet with her place in the world (at least not consciously), and yet she, too, will, later in the film, be frightened of policemen and fear being abandoned. Here, like Schwartz’s childhood self, she is “old enough to know”, on some level, that the unconscious, self-contained grace of the sea gull is “the best escape to know”, and so follows the gull in flight, as we so often follow birds in flight, with our eyes, going where we cannot go.

The telescope turns off. Alice asks Philip for another dime to put into the telescope, but he shakes his head no, saying, “No, we have to go back to the hotel.” Alice says, “Isn’t Mommy coming any more”? An interesting choice of words, since “any more” reveals Alice’s fear of being left permanently. Philip shakes his head no again, and Alice, in a gesture revealing of her anger and distress, takes her chewing gum from her mouth and throws it away over her left shoulder. Philip, annoyed, says, “Hey, you can’t do that”, and seizes her jacket to pull her along with him.

They return to the hotel, where the concierge tells Philip that Lisa left an hour ago but left a note for Philip. Philip reads, “I can’t go yet. Hans is hysterical. I can’t leave him alone. Please take Alice with you or I’ll never get away. See you in Amsterdam, the day after tomorrow.” Alice asks who the note is from and Philip shows it to her. They leave for the airport and on the way, on the bus to the airport, Alice, upset by the news that her mother isn’t coming with them, looks at the passing scenery and says, “I saw all this the day we arrived.” Phil asks if she has all she needs in her suitcase and she nods.

At the airport, sitting and watching the jets arrive and take off (a little boy in a cowboy hat runs by in the background), Alice asks Philip if he likes flying, to which Philip mutters a nondescript reply and shakes his head no. Alice says, “I like the food, it’s wrapped up so nicely” (using the German word *essen*, “to eat” ; Alice, during their journey home, is preoccupied with eating, so Philip, when the city of Essen is mentioned later, says sarcastically to her, “Sounds familiar, doesn’t

it?"). Philip gives Alice a sideways, contemptuous glance and looks away, ignoring her remark. Alice is upset by his refusal to engage with her. She walks off in a huff, her wallet around her neck on a string.

Looking a bit bored and depressed, Philip pulls his camera out. Meanwhile, Alice finds a pay TV, inserts a coin into it, and settles down to watch: a commercial of Louis Prima advertising a collection of Italian records appears and the Italian song "Volare" starts to play ("Volare" means "to fly" in English, and the lyrics of "Volare" are about flying in the sky, another allusion to flying and escape in *Alice*) (*lyrics translate.com*). (See Note 1 at the end of this article.) Alice changes the channels, to a baseball game, a football game, a film, and then another film, *An Outcast of the Islands* (1951, directed by Carol Reed and starring Trevor Howard, based on Joseph Conrad's novel). Alice changes the channel again and starts watching another film. Philip finds her watching the TV and looks at her disgustedly, telling her "I've looked all over for you."

As the jet takes off, Philip takes a photo of the sky outside. Alice reaches to take the photo that's coming out of the camera, and says, "There's nothing on it." Philip smiles, then says, "Wait a minute, then it'll appear real clear." When the photo develops, Alice says, "That's a lovely picture. It's so empty," causing Philip to laugh. In a sense, this conversation reflects the beauty of film: the filmmaker decides what images to fill the blank space of the film, and when to linger on a scene so that the viewer can use his or her imagination to reflect on the seemingly empty image and fill it with personal meaning.

Later Philip and Alice play "Hangman". Philip "hangs" Alice three times as she fails to correctly guess the words he is thinking of: *Angst* (fear), *Himmel* (heaven), and *Traum* (dream). All these words, of course, are abstract, so that Alice says, after failing to guess *Traum*, "'Dream'. Those words don't count. Only things that really exist." This remark, of course, pinpoints Philip's predicament of failing to turn his thoughts and ideas into something viable that will connect him with other people. After this Alice watches TV again while Philip writes in his notebook in the bathroom, away from Alice in a little private space. He comes back to find Alice asleep, leaning over his own seat, and gently places a pillow under her head, turns the light off, and sleeps himself. The jet is shown flying through a darkened sky. It is as if time has been suspended, with Philip and Alice hovering between moments.

When the jet lands at Schiphol Airport near Amsterdam, Alice asks Philip, "Why do they have a different time here?" Philip replies, "You can see why—it's broad daylight." Alice looks at her watch and asks incredulously, "At midnight?" Philip yawns, saying, "Believe me, it's five in the morning." Alice asks, "Do we go to sleep again?" Philip nods and says, "At the hotel nearest to the

airport. No matter what it costs.” Alice nods. It is a “different time” here for both Philip and Alice not only because of the difference in time zones, but because they are adjusting in time to each other and their relationship will change in time.

As Alice gets up to brush her teeth, Philip lies down again, turns on the radio, and hears Mascagni’s “Intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana*” playing. The music takes him back to his past, and to the Old World rather than the New World and its pop music. His eyes go vacant and he is lost in thought, hovering between his past and his present, mulling things over in order to find a way forward. From the bathroom, Alice tells Philip, “I had a funny dream. I turned on the TV set and I sat down in a chair. I tied myself to it and then suddenly a scary movie came on. I couldn’t get away.” Philip smiles, both because of the nostalgic feelings the music on the radio brings to him and in recognition that Alice, in spite of the way she irritates him, is expressing his own fear of being hypnotized and brainwashed by television—she and he are, in effect, kindred spirits. Alice continues, “I couldn’t turn off the TV. I couldn’t close my eyes, either. I couldn’t untie myself. So I had to watch the film.” Philip smiles again and continues to daydream.

Later, as they wait for a bus outside to take them into Amsterdam, Alice asks Philip what he can tell her about himself, but he says there’s nothing he can tell her—except that his age is 31. Alice reaches into Philip’s bag and takes his camera out, saying, “I want to take a picture of you.” She does, and he helps her. When the photo appears, Alice tells Philip, “So you’ll at least know what you look like.” Alice, in other words, has sensed Philip’s loss of self and is trying to help him find himself again. As Philip looks into the photo of himself, Alice, behind him, also looks at it. The reflection of their two faces in the photo merge into one, which in turn reflects that their destinies are tied together. Philip finds himself when he finds others and forgets himself.

As they have a day to wait for Alice’s mother to arrive in Amsterdam, they spend the day in Amsterdam and return to the hotel at night. These scenes are skillfully used to track the uneasy development of their relationship and the changes in their moods from moment to moment. At one point Alice asks Philip what’s troubling him, and he answers “Fear.” She asks, “What kind of fear?” He asks her in return, “Are there different kinds?” “Yes,” she answers. He says, “I’m afraid of fear.” Alice asks, “Why are you afraid of that?” Philip smiles wryly to himself and asks rhetorically, “Why?”

When they go to the airport to meet Lisa, Philip finds that Lisa was not on the jet from New York. He comes back to where Alice is waiting to tell her this; she looks at him very unhappily, grabs her suitcase as he takes his, and they start off to the information desk. Alice suddenly lets go of Philip’s hand, puts her suitcase down, and runs off to a women’s restroom. This is the first

time she has let the absence of her mother get to her.

Philips picks up the cases and goes to wait outside the restroom. A few minutes later the female attendant comes up to Phil and asks him if Alice is his little girl. He nods; she says, “She’s been crying her eyes out. It’s alright for you to come in.” Philip enters the restroom and goes to the stall where, the attendant has indicated, Lisa is hiding. Philip tries to open the door of the stall, but it’s locked. He sits on his haunches and asks Alice to come out, but she refuses; Philip remembers that Alice also wanted to visit her grandmother in Germany, and asks Alice where her grandmother lives. Alice can’t remember, so Philip retrieves an appointment book from his pocket, looks at the back of it for an index of cities in Germany, and starts reading them off to Alice. Each time he reads off a name, Alice answers “No”. Finally, near the end of the alphabet, Philip reads “Wuppertal”. Alice recognizes this as being some place connected with her past and repeats, “Wuppertal.” Philip, incredulous, laughs, “Wuppertal?” He stands up and asks, “And where in Wuppertal?” Alice at last unlocks the door of the stall and comes out. She dabs her right eye with a tissue and says, “I don’t know exactly, but I’ll find it when I get there.”

Philip has found the right “key” to figuratively unlock Alice’s memory and get Alice to literally unlock the door, just as, as the end of *Alice* indicates, he will finally find the right words to unlock his story for the publishers and unlock the significance of his photos. Alice, in turn, indicates here how we can’t predict the future or know where life will lead us, but find the meaning of each moment as and when we get there.

Alice again becomes Philip’s guide in a barber shop where he goes with Alice to get his hair cut. Since Philip can’t understand Dutch, Alice translates for him, but adds her own sarcastic touches as the translator. When the barber asks Alice if Philip wants his hair thinned, Alice tells him, “I think it’s thin enough.” The barber then asks Alice if he should wash Philip’s hair, to which she responds, “That’s a good idea.” When Philip asks her what the barber said, Alice merely answers, “Nothing.” While Philip is getting his hair cut, Alice reads a comic book: she turns a page, raises her eyebrows, and smiles in surprise. We see that what she is reading is “De Klankentapper” (The Iron Flowerpotters), from the Dutch comic book series *Suske en Wiske*, translated in Britain as *Spike and Suzy* and in the U.S. as *Willy and Wanda* (“Spike and Suzy,” *Wikipedia*). The comic books are centered around two children, Suske and Wiske, who travel with their family having comic adventures. In a way, Wenders is revealing again how images—whether in a comic book or in a film—can bring relief to us by giving us characters we can identify with which help us put our own comical/distressing experiences at a distance and laugh at them.

Later, on a bus, Philip nervously counts his last few coins while Alice chats with another little



girl in the back of the bus (she swaps one of her belongings for a transistor radio the other little girl has). After that, Alice and Philip spend the afternoon riding the *Wuppertaler Schwebebahn* (The Suspension Line), in Wuppertal (“Wuppertal,” *Wikipedia*) looking for Alice’s grandmother’s house, which Alice insists she’ll be able to recognize when she sees it, even though she doesn’t remember either her grandmother’s maiden or married name (her grandmother’s name is different from her mother’s name). Failing to find the house, they book a room at a cheap hotel. In their room Alice, disconsolate, starts to cry. Philip, himself tired and unhappy, tells her angrily, “Stop crying!” Alice, intimidated, hides under the covers of her bed. Philip says more calmly, “Alice, don’t let it get you down. We’ve hardly begun to look. We’ll go to the city registry tomorrow.” Alice yells, “But I don’t know the name!” Philip, flummoxed, has no answer to this. He looks out the window. Alice, wanting to be comforted, asks, “Will you tell me a story?” Philip bursts out, “I don’t know any stories!” True enough, since he hasn’t been able to figure out his own life or find the words for the story he owes the publisher, let alone words to tell Alice a story. At his outburst Alice completely hides her head under the covers. Philip, a bit ashamed of himself, sits down, pulls himself together, and attempts to tell Alice a story. He begins, “Once upon a time there was a man....” Alice pulls her head and shoulders out from under the covers to listen to Philip. He continues, “Once up a time there was a little boy who got lost.” We see that Philip’s story not only has a calming effect on Alice, but is therapeutic for Philip. The story he is telling is his own story :

He went for a walk in the woods with his mother one lovely summer afternoon. And as they came to a clearing there was sunshine. His mother suddenly felt tired and wanted to rest. All of a sudden the little boy heard a rustling in the bushes. And he found a hedgehog. He ran after the hedgehog until he came to a stream. And in the stream he saw a fish. He ran along the edge of the stream until he saw a bridge. On the bridge he saw a horseman. The horseman sat very calmly on his horse and looked off into the distance. So the boy went onto the bridge and carefully walked around the horse. The rider rode slowly away. And the boy ran after him until he lost sight of him. Then he came to a highway with lots of trucks driving along it. The boy sat on the roadside until a truck stopped. The driver asked him if he’d like a lift. The boy was delighted and sat proudly next to the driver who let him fiddle with the radio. And the boy rode as far as the sea. And at the sea he remembered his mother again. At this juncture, Philip smiles, both because he is remembering his mother and because he has become involved in telling the story. He looks up to find Alice fast asleep. While Philip has been telling the story Wenders has intercut the scene with views of Alice listening intently, twisting a

strand of her hair around her finger, gradually getting drowsy until, calmed, she falls sleep.

In Philip's fairy story (with its familiar opening, "Once upon a time"), the mother gets tired and wants to rest, so the son goes on without her. This may reflect the stress that Wenders' own mother experienced and her own need to rest. We recognize the hedgehog as a familiar figure in fairy tales, a beast who acts as a guide to the protagonist. In Philip's story, the hedgehog, through running away, leads the boy to the next stage of his life. The horseman looking into the distance may represent Philip's childhood desire to travel further. The boy comes to a highway, gets a lift, and rides "as far as the sea" on a truck in which the driver lets the boy "fiddle with the radio." We remember Philip fiddling with the radio earlier while driving in the U.S., for Philip is the driver now (he will rent a car the next day so that he and Alice can continue the search for her grandmother's house) and Alice is the child riding as far as the sea (near Amsterdam), where she remembers her mother. Philip has become a father figure for Alice and begins to be able to see himself in Alice.

At breakfast the next morning, in a restaurant, Alice gets angry at the waiter because he has already poured milk on the cornflakes she ordered. She tells him, "That's not the way I like my cornflakes. They are already soggy! I want to pour the milk myself." Philip resignedly tells the waiter, "Bring her another bowl and a tea for me." He then tells Alice he's rented a car so that they can drive around to find Alice's grandmother's house. Alice says again, "Once I see it, I'll recognize it." When Alice asks Philip about the money needed to rent the car, Philip tells her, "I found some expired Eurocheques. They didn't notice at the car rental." As he prepares to pay for breakfast, Alice notices that he has a motel key and asks Philip where it's from. He looks at it wonderingly, replying, "The Skyway Motel...North Carolina...I forgot to hand it in." Throughout *Alice* forgetfulness and tricks of memory occur, causing misunderstandings and delays in the journey. This is another underlying theme of the film: how people perceive things subjectively, create stories to explain their past to themselves, and try to find answers to help them go forward. Finding these answers can take a lifetime; as T. S. Eliot said, "In my end is my beginning.../We shall not cease from exploration/And the end of all our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time."

Later, as they drive around, Philip asks Alice to describe the house, but all she can remember is that it was old, with some trees, and that the stairway was dark. As they drive on and on, Alice gets bored and loses her concentration; she tries to tell Philip a joke, but Philip is in no mood for it, and tells her to pay attention. As they continue to drive, the camera shows the streets and houses slipping by, like images in a dream, like time slipping away from moment to moment, to the

hypnotic music of Can—and indeed the cinematography is mesmerizing, and one is lulled into a reverie. Alice almost falls asleep, as Philip glances at her from time to time in alarm. Alice suddenly jerks awake, anxious, then notices, as she says to Philip, “That’s the street where our hotel is.” Philip answers sourly, “So?” Alice says, “I’m thirsty.” For Alice, as for children in general, food brings comfort and distracts one from the pressure of anxiety.

Philip pulls over, parks, and they enter the Italian Ice Cream café. Inside is a boy eating ice cream and listening to “On the Road Again” by Canned Heat on a jukebox. Throughout this scene in the café this song plays in the background, the boy occasionally humming along, and of course is a reflection of Philip’s and Alice’s situation :

Well, I’m so tired of cryin’  
But I’m out on the road again  
I’m on the road again  
Well, I’m so tired of cryin’  
But I’m out on the road again  
I’m on the road again  
I ain’t got no woman  
Just to call my special friend

You know the first time  
I traveled out in the rain and snow  
In the rain and snow  
You know the first time  
I traveled out in the rain and snow  
In the rain and snow  
I didn’t have no payroll  
Not even no place to go

And my dear mother left me  
When I was quite young  
When I was quite young  
And my dear mother left me  
When I was quite young  
When I was quite young

She said Lord have mercy  
On my wicked son  
On my wicked son

Take a hint from me mama  
Please don't you cry no more  
Don't you cry no more  
Take a hint from me mama  
Please don't you cry no more  
Don't you cry no more  
'Cause it's soon morning  
Down the road I'm going  
But I ain't goin' down that long old lonesome road  
All by myself  
But I ain't goin' down that long old lonesome road  
All by myself  
I can't carry you baby  
Gonna carry someone else

Philip and Alice are on the road together, and Philip has “no woman just to call [his] special friend”. Philip has no payroll and no place to go in particular, stuck as he is with writer's block and little money. He has thoughts of his mother, as Wenders did. Furthermore, in relating these lyrics to *Alice*, “mama” can also be seen as referring to Alice, with Philip, exasperated, telling Alice not to cry and resenting being burdened with helping her, while Alice is anxious that Philip wants to abandon her on her own lonesome road.

Alice orders a large ice cream with whipped cream and Philip orders a coffee. Out of the blue, Alice, having suddenly realized what she had told Philip earlier about her grandmother isn't actually true, blurts out to Philip, “Grandma never lived in Wuppertal.” Philip, hearing this, sits staring at Alice in stony silence. Rüdiger Vogler discusses what Philip does after this in the documentary *One Who Set Forth* (Wehn, 2007) :

In *Alice in the Cities*...this is one of the most beautiful scenes in cinema, ever. In the ice cream shop, when a boy by the jukebox listens to a song [“On the Road Again”]. After this long search for her granny, Alice says, in Wuppertal. And then she says, “Grandma never lived in Wuppertal.” There are many ways to react. I could have shouted at her or told her to go to

hell, I could've smacked her, I could have done many things. But I don't really do anything. It's a very long scene without dialogue. I just have this ice cream spoon, and I go to the toilet, look in the mirror and say, "Oh, boy!"

In the Australian DVD of *Alice in den Städten* (hereafter referred to as *Alice*), *Wim Wenders' Road Movies*, Madman Films, 1973), the English subtitle for what Philip says in front of the bathroom mirror is "Oh, terrific." Regardless of whether he says "Oh, boy" or "Oh, terrific", this scene is telling. Once again Philip is confronting himself, his image, in a mirror, and he looks at himself as he makes this remark with a rueful smile and a little laugh. He is learning to see things with humor in order to place them in perspective, even though he does not like not being in total control of the situation (who does like not being in control?). But he knows that Alice is still a young girl, and that he, as the adult, must see them through to their destination; they are fated for a while to travel together. His reflection on his own reflection reflects the way he is changing and his situation is changing to a more positive outlook, which will ensure a more positive outcome for them both.

Philip returns to the table where Alice is sitting and asks her, "Why didn't you say that before?" Alice retorts, "I told you I wanted to stay in Amsterdam. What is it you have to do? All you ever do is scribble away in your notebook." This is a home truth that Philip doesn't want to hear but must acknowledge inwardly. Nevertheless, he is not pleased, and gets back at Alice by telling her, "I'm taking you to the police. They can help you better than I can," which, naturally enough, is a nasty little shock for Alice. As Philip leaves the café and Alice follows, the scene fades out with a last look at the little boy humming as "On the Road Again" fades out, and at the very last second, before the next scene emerges, he gazes straight into the camera. In this way, of course, Wenders is breaking the fourth wall: the boy looks directly at us. We are, in a sense, being asked to think about what we ourselves would do in similar circumstances, or are doing in the actual circumstances of our daily lives.

Philip deposits Alice at the local police station, and the policeman at the counter asks him to sign his name and to be in a place where the police can reach him if necessary. Philip agrees, and as he turns away he "accidentally on purpose" starts to pocket the pen the policeman gave him to sign his name—to continue scribbling in his notebook, no doubt. But the policeman notices and asks for the pen back, and Philip sheepishly gives it back to him.

All this while a bearded police inspector in the back has been watching this exchange with Alice waiting nearby and we can see he is curious and wondering about this incident. Alice watches Philip as he leaves but says nothing, hurt at being abandoned. Philip, looking dejected,

goes down the street outside, then sees a poster stuck on a wall nearby advertising a Chuck Berry concert that very day. On the spur of the moment, despite his low funds, Philip decides to go see Chuck Berry live.

In the next scene, of Philip and others sitting on a lawn and watching Chuck Berry play “Memphis, Tennessee” live, Wenders cleverly intersplices live film footage of Chuck Berry and cuts back and forth between the view of Chuck Berry playing, with an infectious, charismatic grin, and Philip really enjoying himself for a while, forgetting his troubles and finding his love for American pop music renewed. As with Canned Heat’s “On the Road Again”, Chuck Berry’s “Memphis, Tennessee” has a direct bearing on what is happening between Philip and Alice :

Long distance information, give me Memphis, Tennessee  
Help me find the party trying to get in touch with me  
She could not leave her number, but I know who placed the call  
‘Cause my uncle took the message and wrote it on the wall

Help me, information, get in touch with my Marie  
She’s the only one who’d phone me here from Memphis, Tennessee  
Her home is on the south side, high up on a ridge  
Just a half a mile from the Mississippi Bridge

Help me, information, more than that I cannot add  
Only that I miss her and all the fun we had  
But we were pulled apart because her mom did not agree  
And tore apart our happy home in Memphis, Tennessee

Last time I saw Mari she’s waving me goodbye  
With hurry home drops on her cheek that trickled from her eye  
Marie is only six years old, information please  
Try to put me through to her in Memphis, Tennessee  
(“Memphis, Tennessee”, *Metrolyrics.com*. n. d.)

The way these seemingly simple lyrics telegraph a story and the details of that story in a way that one can immediately grasp is ingenious. We are not told who is speaking to whom, but we can figure it out easily. The narrator is a divorced father asking a telephone operator to try to find and connect him with his six-year-old daughter, Marie, whom he has been separated from due to his

divorce from her mother and the mother being granted custody of Marie (just as Alice's mother, Lisa, has taken Alice away from the man whom Lisa was living with). The father has few or no friends who want to communicate with him: Marie is "the only one" who would try to contact him (just as Philip, who becomes Alice's surrogate father, is isolated with few friends; Alice is the only one who wants Philip to stay). Like Alice, Marie is not able to connect with the person she's trying to find (in Alice's case, it is Alice's grandmother), and both Marie and Alice have to rely on older males for help (an uncle in Marie's case, Philip in Alice's case). The father misses Marie, just as Philip slowly realizes he enjoys Alice's company and will miss her when they ultimately part. The last stanza of the song suddenly switches from the past tense of the penultimate stanza ("we were pulled apart because her mom did not agree/and tore apart our happy home") to present tense: "she's waving me goodbye": everything is happening *right now*, just as each moment in a film, in cinema, is a moment being lived *right now*. As Marie waves goodbye to her father, she has "hurry home drops on her cheek that trickled from her eye": the expression "hurry home drops" brilliantly compresses and conveys the meaning that Marie is sad and depressed because she is made to hurry home, away from her father, by her mother, and because she wants her father to hurry home—to her home.

Seeing Chuck Berry in concert is a turning point for Philip, and for the film, because this experience leads Philip to accept and even welcome his responsibility for Alice, not just himself, first unconsciously, later consciously. In the evening, after he has checked out of his hotel and gotten into his rented car to drive away, he is surprised by Alice suddenly climbing into the car and telling him, "Now I know where my grandmother lives." Instead of being upset or irritated by this, Philip, in a good mood, grins and asks Alice, "You do?" Alice answers, "Yes. A policeman came looking for me just now. But I stayed on the other side of the road. Yuck, the food they gave me at the police station." Philip starts to drive away, laughing. Alice continues, "When the policemen were questioning me, I remembered that mummy and I used to live in Wuppertal when I was little. Not Grandma. The police looked it up and I was right. And mum's name was not Van Dam but Krueger. And then I remembered, I told this to the police, that we always took the train to visit Grandma. It couldn't have been very far because we always got back the same night." Alice smiles a little at having figured this out, and Philip smiles with her. "And when Grandma read to me, the pages rustled as she read them, because tiny bits of coal came through the window. Grandma lived in the Ruhr district." Another piece in the jigsaw puzzle has been found. Philip laughs and gives Alice a little hug, repeating, "The Ruhr district." Alice asks, "Is that big?" Philip replies, "Not particularly, we'll manage it."

Philip tells Alice about having gone to the Chuck Berry concert and asks Alice, "Do you like rock and roll?" Alice answers, "Yes." Philip starts singing "Memphis, Tennessee" to Alice as he drives on.

They spend the night sleeping in the car at a roadside car park because they can't afford a hotel. Philip gives Alice some sandwiches to eat for breakfast and shows her where the Ruhr district is in a road atlas. Alice suddenly remembers that she has a photo of her Grandma's house, and tells Philip that she forgot to show it to the police. She shows it to Philip, who says, "That makes things very easy." As they get into the car and continue driving, Philip tells Alice that he used to live in the Ruhr district, but hasn't been there for a long time, and that now his parents live on the lower side of the Rhine River. The next scene, of them driving through a suburb as the hypnotic music of Can plays, is one of the most famous scenes in *Alice*: Alice watches, from the open window of her side of the car, a little boy on a bicycle, her counterpart, watching Alice and Philip glide by as he tries to keep up with them on his bicycle on the sidewalk. Alice averts her gaze from the little boy's reverse gaze for a moment; when she looks again, the little boy has vanished, left behind, as if he had never been. A timeless scene: going, going, gone.

Alice asks Philip if he has a girlfriend; he doesn't answer. She suggests going for a swim, then, realizing Philip probably doesn't think much of this idea, rationalizes by saying, "The water's probably dirty around here."

There is a charming, funny and touching scene when Alice and Philip take four photographs together in an automated photo booth. For the first photo, only Alice smiles; Philip, distracted, doesn't. Alice casts a sideways glance up at him. But then Philip does smile, and makes a comical face, and Alice is pleased. Later, in the car, she looks at these instantly developed photos again and smiles happily, as in the photos Philip and she have made comical faces together: they have bonded, father and daughter. After that, Philip and Alice are shown near a roadside exercise area: certain exercises are illustrated on a signpost. Philip starts to do the exercises, deliberately poking fun at both them and himself too, making circular motions with his arms in a comical way. Alice imitates Philip, also doing the exercises for comical effect. No words are spoken, but it is obvious that Philip and Alice have grown closer and have warmer feelings for each other. When they get back into the car, Alice, in the back seat, again looks at the photos they took together and beams, comforted and reassured by the fact she and Philip have indeed bonded, have become close.

Philip and Alice stop in one suburb to ask an elderly couple if they recognize the photo of Alice's grandmother's house, but the man answers, "I don't know. It's not here. All these old houses are going to be pulled down. So Krupp can build a new hospital." Wenders' reference to



Krupp (based in Essen, the town whose name rings a bell for Alice because it reminds her of eating) is, of course, ironic: Krupp was a notorious arms manufacturer for the Nazis in World War II, and now they have changed to beneficial action—building a hospital—but in the process are still in the business of destruction, this time of old houses. The past is constantly being swept away, replaced by the new, and all we can do is to hang on for dear life. As they drive away, Alice looks at the spaces where old houses used to be and says, “The empty spaces look like graves. ‘House graves.’” Again, Wenders is lamenting and commemorating the past, vanishing in the face of the uniformity of contemporary housing.

A taxi driver they show Alice’s photo to redirects them and, as they drive along Erdbrueckenstrasse in Gelsenkirchen (during World War II, Gelsenkirchen was “a site of a women’s subcamp of the Buchenwald concentration camp”, “Gelsenkirchen,” *Wikipedia.com*), Alice sees the house in her photo, and yells, “Stop! That’s it!” Philip stops the car and Alice runs out to the house to consult the owner of the house, while Philip compares the photo of the house to the reality, dumbfounded, and then says, “Unbelievable”, as it sinks in that the dream of the house, reflected in the photo, is actually real. But Alice returns, downcast, to tell Philip that the woman of the house, an Italian, says she has lived in the house for two years and doesn’t know anything about Alice’s grandmother. Philip says, to console Alice, that they can at least go swimming. Alice perks up at this, relieved that Philip is not angry. She pauses, then nods “Yes” emphatically. Philip smiles at this, perhaps also feeling relieved.

At the pool, while swimming, Philip and Alice playfully give vent to all their pent-up frustrations, calling each other (Philip first, then Alice, in turn) “Fish face! Bed pisser!”, “Pukeface!”, “Stupid cow!”, “Greedy guts!”, “Nanny goat! Knucklehead! Nerve-wracking yak-yak!” They playfully wrestle, their first actual, and innocent, physical contact, genuine play between “father” and “daughter”. Later, lying on a blanket on the grass, Alice asks Philip, “I wonder if people take you for my father.” Philip, who has been smiling, is startled by Alice’s remark and says, “Me? Why?...I don’t know, why not? What else could they think?” Hearing this, one might contrast our present times with the past, when *Alice* was made, and think, “Ah, those were innocent days,” but no time, no era, has ever been innocent. Wenders is revealing to us that Alice, a nine-year-old girl, is certainly innocent, but Philip, a 31-year-old man, is also, in his way, innocent: experienced in the ways of the world, certainly, but still in a way a young lad longing to find his soul mate and, as a young man, happy to feel that onlookers would have no doubt in thinking he is Alice’s father, a thought which, one suspects, brings him a surprising feeling of pride that this could be so.

But Alice, young herself and still finding her way, wants to test the idea. She spies a young

woman lying on the grass nearby and says impulsively, jumping up, "I'll ask that lady over there." Philip, alarmed, says, "Oh no, you don't!" But it is too late. Alice asks the woman playfully if she thinks Philip is her father; the young woman appraises Philip from afar and says, "Never! No way!" Alice yells to Philip, "See! She doesn't think so!" Philip, stung by this denial, says, "And why not?" The woman and Alice agree that Philip is too fat, pulls his nose (at this Philip moves his nose back and forth to "verify" their opinion of him), snores, has got flat feet—and, Alice winds up, "he's stone broke. Can't even afford a decent meal." Philip gets angry at this, feeling that Alice has gone too far. He says, "You little liar! You eat nothing but hot dogs anyway!" The woman, seeing the change in the situation, asks Alice, "Are you hungry?" Alice nods. The woman pulls a banana and a pear out from a bag to give to Alice and Philip comes over, sits down, and, abashed, picks up the pear to eat, saying to the woman, "Just what we needed—an invitation to dinner." Primal needs have won out over male pride.

Later, at the woman's flat, while Philip is recounting his and Alice's road adventures to the woman in the living room, Alice, in the kitchen, is drinking from a glass bottle of milk and feeling neglected. She places the bottle on a scale to see how much it weighs, and then deliberately pushes it so that it falls to the floor and smashes into bits. (She may be displaying a bit of an Electra complex here.) Philip, hearing this, gets up angrily and says, "That greedy brat!" The woman tries to calm Philip, saying, "You act like you really were her father." Philip sits down again, smiling in embarrassment, saying, "True. That's what she's done to me." Alice listens to all this in the kitchen, unhappily, then gets a bucket and a dishrag to clean up the mess in atonement. Later that night, after Alice falls asleep on the sofa, Philip tucks Alice in and turns off the television set she had been watching, blank because all the programs have gone off the air. Since there is only one bed, Philip and the woman end up sleeping together (as had almost happened with Lisa, Alice's mother). The next morning Alice wakes up early, opens the sliding door between her room and the woman's bedroom and sees the woman and Philip still asleep. Alice has had enough experience seeing her own mother with other men to know what has happened, but seems a little unnerved at finding her "father" sleeping with someone else than her own mother, Lisa. She returns to the sofa, digs out the four photos of her and Philip together, and looks at them, smiling, reassured by them. "Like father, like daughter": just as Philip kept taking photos and looking at them to confirm reality, Alice is confirming that the warm relationship that has formed between her and Philip is real, not imagined. Up to now Alice has only been wearing underpants, but she puts on a dress before she goes to wake up Philip.

In his review of *Alice*, the late Philip French commented, no doubt with specific reference to the

above-mentioned scene, “This film couldn’t be made now, partly because of the invention of the mobile phone, partly because of our obsessive fear of anything that might be interpreted as paedophilia” (French, “Alice in the Cities,” *Guardian* 2008). As John Sebastian says in his song “Younger Generation” (1969) (“‘Younger Generation’ Lyrics”, *lyricsmode.com*, n. d.), “I know that all I’ve learned, my kid assumes/And all my deepest worries must be his cartoons,” imagining his son asking him, “What’s the matter daddy? How come you’re turning green? /Can it be that you can’t live up to your dreams?” When *Alice* was first released, in 1974, AIDS was virtually unknown, mobile phones for the public at large didn’t exist, the phrase “sexual harassment” hadn’t yet been coined, and images which in photographs or films might have appeared to be innocent in the 1970s might be considered pornography today. This doesn’t mean that the 1970s were any more innocent than today : it means that unconscious, forbidden thoughts and even acts have “come out of the closet”, so to speak, and we have to be even more on our guard and toe the line even more carefully than when things were hidden. The apostle Paul wrote, “To the pure, all things are pure ; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled” (Titus 1 : 15). Alice is still innocent and Philip still believes in innocence, and realizing this we are made even more aware of the importance of protecting innocents and maintaining purity in ourselves.

Alice gingerly wakes Philip up, asks him to get up (with her hands together in a gesture of supplication as she mouths, “Please!”). Philip wearily acquiesces, but says, “It’s only six [a. m.]” Alice, with quiet sarcasm, asks him, “Did you sleep well?” Philip, embarrassed and a bit ashamed, says nothing. Alice presses the point : “Wouldn’t you rather have slept on the couch?” Philip retorts, “The couch was already occupied. You were there first.” Alice, conciliatory, asks Philip, “What did you dream about?,” referring back consciously or unconsciously to previous references to dreams in *Alice*. Philip answers, “I’ll tell you later.”

Philip, almost down to his last coin, decides that he and Alice will have to go to his parents for help : he has reverted, in a sense, to childhood. As he drives, Alice rests her head on his side, implicitly revealing her filial attachment to Philip. They stop at a roadside stand for something to drink, where there is a newspaper in which Philip reads that, since Alice ran away from the police station, the police have asked the public to help them search for Alice in an attempt to reunite her with her mother and grandmother—and therefore, Philip realizes, the police are searching for him as well on the assumption that he may be Alice’s father and have absconded with her. Philip returns the rented car and he and Alice board a ferry, the *Glück Auf* (i. e., Good Fortune, reminding one of the English expression “When my ship sails in”), to cross the Rhine. On the

ferry, Alice astutely remarks to Philip that “You haven’t taken a photo in a long time—since Amsterdam.” Philip acknowledges this with a nod. They no longer need to confirm reality with photographic images. She asks Philip if he’s looking forward to seeing his parents, but he merely shrugs.

Unbeknownst to Philip and Alice, but revealed to us by the camera, we see that the bearded police inspector who watched them curiously at the police station is in a car being transported on this very same ferry: he does a double take when he sees Philip and Alice and removes his sunglasses to verify what he is seeing. He then makes a call on his car phone. Meanwhile, Philip, reminded by Alice that he hasn’t taken a photo in a long time, decides to take one of a young woman nearby with an arm around her young son who is about Alice’s age, as Alice looks on wistfully. This woman is portrayed by Sibylle Baier, a young German actress and singer-songwriter at the time, singing the last lines of a song she wrote in English, “Softly”, that was recorded between 1970 and 1973 but not released until 2006, one of 14 songs on a CD, *Colour Green* (Orange Twin Records, [www.orangetwinrecords.com](http://www.orangetwinrecords.com), 2006), with liner notes by her son (“Colour Green,” *Wikipedia.com*, n. d.) :

“...love them if ever they come, wherever they’ve gone  
My daughter, my son one by one  
My daughter my son one by one  
Softly” (“Softly”, <http://www.sybillebaier.com>, 2010)

Obviously, in this moment Alice represents her daughter and the little boy her son. He and Alice smile at each other. The police inspector gets out of his car, walks over to Philip, and takes the photo Philip has just taken, saying, “May I?...There’s nothing on it.” Philip just nods. The inference here, it seems, is that our lives are like as yet undeveloped photos or unfinished films: it is up to us as to what appears in the photos or the films. We are, in a sense, *tabula rasa* even though what we are, become, and do is latently there already, just as with the Polaroid negative that quickly becomes a recognizable photograph.

The police inspector tells Philip that Alice’s grandmother has been located and her mother has showed up. The police put both Alice and Philip on a train to Munich—Alice’s ticket is first class, paid for by the police. At the train station, Alice, suddenly remembering the \$100 bill she has in her purse, surprises Philip by giving it to him, saying, “For your ticket,” and Philip grins. Their affection for each other, after all they’ve been through together, clearly shines through.

On the train, Philip, as he and Alice face each other in opposite seats, reads an article in a newspaper, *Die Zeitung* (*The Newspaper*, a parody by Wenders of the title of the German news-

paper *Die Zeit*, The Times) : the headline of the article reads “*Verlorene Welt* (Lost World) : *Zum Tode John Ford*”, referring to the recent death of the American film director John Ford. Philip looks up with a serious expression on his face at Alice, who is listening to her transistor radio, which she is holding close to her left ear. Alice, noticing, asks him, “What are you going to do in Munich?” Philip sighs, smiles, and replies, “I’ll finish this story” —meaning, of course, that he’ll finish both the book he’s working on and this adventure with Alice, just as the film will finish and leave us to our private worlds. Alice says, “Your scribbling?” Philip, although this reference to his writing by Alice previously angered him, now only smiles affirmatively and nods. Then he asks Alice, “And what’ll you do?” Alice just raises her eyebrows in a “Who knows?” gesture, turns off her radio, and gets up to look out the open window at the Rhine. Philip joins her at the window : they look out together, look at each other, and look out again, together this time, not separately. Their future (and ours) is left open-ended, but the outlook is positive. Where Antoine Doinel in Truffaut’s *Les Quatres Cents Coups* finds himself alone by the sea, facing us “dazed and confused”, Philip and Alice look outward together as the film concludes, the haunting soundtrack by CAN accompanying the view, with a sweeping final shot that takes us high for a bird’s eye view of flocks of birds sweeping over the open fields and following the train as it heads in the direction of the open sea.

Note 1 Thomas Pynchon says of “Volare,” “And who, really, is so fancy-schmancy they can’t appreciate ‘Volare,’ arguably among the greatest pop tunes ever written? Young man dreams he’s flying in the sky, above it all, defying gravity and time, like having midlife early, in the second verse he wakes up, back on earth, first thing he sees is the big blue eyes of the woman he loves. And that will turn out to be sky enough for him. All men should grow up so gracefully.” (*The Bleeding Edge*, page 154)

Note 2 Thanks to David Burger for German translation.

Note 3 Only works cited for this article that were not included in the Works Cited list for Part 1 of *Alice in den Städten* will be included below.

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# 映画「都会のアリス」(後編)

アンダスン ケネス

## 抄 録

本論文は、筆者が昨年、『聖学院大学論叢』(26 巻 2 号) (2014 年 3 月) に発表した論文「都会のアリス」(*Alice in den Städten*: Part II) の継続研究である。今回は具体的には、ヴィム・ヴェンダース (Wim Wenders, 1945-) 監督作品「都会のアリス」の中で、3 名の登場人物——リサ、アリス、そしてフィリップ——がニューヨーク、マンハッタンのホテルの一室にいる場面からそれ以降の展開に注目している。フィリップとアリスは、リサと別れてからドイツへと旅立つが、その過程でフィリップとアリスの関係に起こった変化や、その人間関係の深まり方に注目する。また、フィリップが如何に自己理解を深め、また他者の存在への意識を強めるようになったのか、そしてそうしたことが彼に結果的に執筆活動を継続する道を見出させることになった経緯と過程を考察する。さらにこの論文では、アリスとフィリップの人間関係に、映画「都会のアリス」の制作過程——構想から撮影、編集、そして完成へといたる過程——で採用された映画撮影法との類似性を読み取ることができる点にも注目している。また、一編の映画作品として「都会のアリス」とその映画撮影法が、如何にして映画を鑑賞するわれわれ自身を真剣な内省に、そしてわれわれの周囲の世界について熟慮する人生態度へと至らしめるのか、という問題についても考えたい。加えて、この映画の内容を補強する重要な役割を与えられている挿入曲としてのポピュラー音楽についても、検討の対象としている。さらにこの映画が、欧米の映画と文化の流行を如何に反映しているかという点についても言及する。

キーワード：テレビ、航空便、逃避、内省、写真、恐れ、イメージ、ポップ・カルチャー、ジョン・フォード、映画「大人は判ってくれない」